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DE RUEHTC #0586/01 0871337  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 281337Z MAR 07  
FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8678  
INFO RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHDC  
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC  
RUEHC/DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC  
RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 THE HAGUE 000586

SIPDIS

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DEPT FOR G/TIP, EUR/PGI, EUR/UBI

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [KWMN](#) [ELAB](#) [SMIG](#) [ASEC](#) [KFRD](#) [PREF](#) [NL](#)

SUBJECT: EXTENSIVE NETWORK PROVIDES SERVICES TO VICTIMS OF  
TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

¶1. (U) Summary. Rescued trafficking in persons (TIP) victims are supported by an extensive network of service organizations which provide legal, social, health, and education services. Public health organizations participate in anti-TIP outreach activities and provide health care for at-risk women. In the past two years, the Dutch government has increased funding for TIP victim assistance programs, as well as public information campaigns to expand awareness of TIP and services available for victims. Coordination between national and local agencies involved in TIP victim protection has also improved as a result of more formalized agreements between caregiver organizations and the government. End Summary

¶2. (U) Care and assistance for TIP victims in the Netherlands is provided by a network of local and national government entities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) funded primarily by the government. Global intern obtained detailed information on services provided to TIP victims during meetings with representatives of three shelters -- Asja, a shelter for underage TIP victims in Leeuwarden; De Roggeveen, a battered women's shelter in Amsterdam; and Stichting Hulpverlening en Opvang Prostituees (SHOP), an NGO in The Hague with a shelter for TIP victims -- and two municipal government healthcare services -- SOAIDS Den Haag, a government-funded Sexually Transmitted Infections/AIDS organization; and GGD Amsterdam, the municipal health service organization. Each of the organizations is part of a service network, and coordinates frequently with other community TIP stakeholders. The shelters also coordinate with The Foundation against Trafficking in Women (STV) which registers all TIP victims in the Netherlands. In The Hague, coordination between service providers was formalized in a written TIP protocol in November 2006. An evaluation of the implementation of the protocol will begin at the end of March.

#### Shelters Offer Many Services

¶3. (U) All three shelters offer TIP victims extensive assistance with legal matters, especially with applications for B-9 visas to obtain temporary residency in the Netherlands. Shelter staff members encourage, but do not require, victims to make official reports to the police and accompany them to their meetings when they choose to do so. Staff members also assist victims complete applications for financial assistance and health insurance. Additionally, the shelters work with the Institute of Migration (IOM) to help repatriate victims who choose to return to their home countries. Some TIP victims are referred to the shelters by the police or by STV, while others are walk-ins; the shelters report to STV those victims who were not previously registered.

¶4. (U) The shelters also provide extensive social support to TIP victims, including comprehensive case management. Victims may take Dutch language courses arranged by the shelters, as well as other educational and life skills courses. Services such as childcare,

job training, and social activities are provided or facilitated by the shelters. Several of the organizations also conduct outreach activities in local schools to prevent domestic trafficking and among prostitutes to educate potential victims about available services.

15. (U) As part of the registration and assistance process, TIP victims are provided government health insurance which allows them to access regular health services in The Netherlands. Additionally, health services are available in both the shelters and government clinics. TIP victims can receive psychological and physical exams upon intake at a care center. Municipal government health services in Amsterdam and The Hague (GGD and SOAIDS) offer free and anonymous examinations to the general public, prostitutes, and TIP victims. GGD additionally conducts outreach education and on-site health services in the Amsterdam Red Light district. According to GGD, this targeted service is especially effective for the identification of potential victims, many of whom would be reluctant to contact a TIP victim service provider directly. SOAIDS Den Haag conducts regular hygiene inspections of the registered brothels in The Hague. According to SOAIDS, hygienic conditions for prostitutes have drastically improved since the legalization of brothels in 2000.

16. (U) The Amsterdam municipal government is spearheading the establishment of a new center to assist prostitutes and TIP victims. Scheduled to open in July 2007, the center, known as the HAG (Help, Advice, and Healthcare), will combine social services and health care in one center for both legal and illegal prostitutes, including TIP victims, and will finance 100 new shelter spots for victims. The center will provide a health clinic, language classes, outreach activities, cultural mediation services, and other social activities under one roof. This central coordination is mirrored at the De Roggeveen shelter, where beginning in July the Amsterdam police will maintain regular hours to encourage and assist TIP victims to report and press charges against trafficker. Other social service

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providers will also have regular hours at the shelter to coordinate activities for TIP victims; shelter capacity for TIP victims will double.

#### Overcoming Barriers

17. (U) The caregiver organizations interviewed reported that the Dutch system for helping TIP victims works well, but that further improvements were nevertheless possible. Asja expressed a desire for more government officials to spend time with the victims themselves, to better understand the issues they face. SHOP in The Hague and De Roggeveen in Amsterdam expressed a desire for a mechanism to permit victims to stay in the Netherlands when their B-9 visas expire. Others cited the new humanitarian permanent residence regulations as an improvement over the previous system. (Note: In early 2007, the GONL implemented new regulations, effective retroactively to August 2006, which make it easier for TIP victims to obtain legal permanent residency status on humanitarian grounds at the conclusion of the legal process against a victim's trafficker. End Note)

18. (U) Several organizations noted recent improvements in local and national government efforts to help TIP victims. The NGOs all said that TIP was high on the Justice Ministry's priority list, and that all levels of government were working to combat TIP, including by working to increase awareness of TIP. They also noted that government funding for police, health care, and NGO shelters had increased substantially in recent years.

19. Comment. The extensive network of care organizations, and their close and increasingly formalized cooperation with the government, demonstrates the Dutch commitment to TIP victim assistance. End Comment.

Blakeman